

Family history - Karen Jurgensen Frank

According to family history the house at 3739 N. Tripp was built by my grandparents Inga and Alfred Jurgensen in 1904.

My grandfather, Alfred Jurgensen, was the son of Grete and Andrew Jorgenson. ("Jorgensen" was how the name is spelled on legal papers relating to Grete's property). He was born March 14, 1879. His father was a watch maker. (a notation found in Alfred's papers says, "Andrew Jurgens, watchcase maker, 1870 Chicago directory". I don't know if Andrew Jurgens was Alfred's father or grandfather. A box of watchmaker's tools was found in attic and sold at house sale April, 1988.) All the information I have on Alfred's parents are from a paper detailing the distribution of Grete's estate. Andrew and Grete had six children; Alfred, John, Anthony, Agnes, Josepha, and another child whose name isn't known. John Jorgensen died on 6/22/34 leaving a wife, Agnes. Anthony Jorgensen died on 10/05/24 leaving his children Ethel Eicholz, Chester Jorgensen, and Andrew Jorgensen. Andrew is still living in Wisconsin. Agnes Jorgensen Nelson died 12/39 leaving a husband, Viggo Nelson, children-Vera Andreson, Norma Fues, and Orrin Nelson. Josepha Jorgensen Hogenson - date of death unknown, Chester and William Anderson are named as heirs of an unknown sibling presumably a daughter of Andrew and Grete. Chester's children are Evelyn, Bernard, and Marie.) None of these people are known to me.

My grandmother, Inga Marie Anda, was born in Norway, September 18, 1879. She was the oldest daughter of Andreas and Sophia Anda. She was the sister of Magda, Louise, Oscar, and Arenth. The family sailed from Haugesand Norway in 1894 when Inga was 15 years old. Andreas and his brothers who had also settled in the United States owned and operated the Anda Brothers Fish Company which sold lutefisk to the Scandinavians in Chicago. The Andas seemed to be a genteel middle class family. They owned at the time of their deaths, a two flat building in the 3800 block of Wrightwood. They were members of Zion Lutheran church in the Wicker park neighborhood. One of the Anda brothers was a doctor and another a Lutheran minister. The Andas appeared to be a loving family. Family photos show a distinguished looking Andreas in suit and side whiskers posing with his family and an ammatronly looking Sophia is pictured standing proudly in her home. Another photo shows the family including grown children with their own infant children seated on the ground at a family picnic. My Grandmother, Inga, appears regal and fashionable in hat and wire rimmed eyeglasses. She is holding a baby who must be her daughter, my aunt, Gladys. Inga worked as a photo retoucher and liked to draw.

I don't know how Inga and Alfred met but I have a silver napkin ring inscribed "to Alfred from Inga, March 14, 1897"- Alfred's birthday. They married in January, 1899 and Gladys was born in August of 1899. The family lived in a small

house built by Alfred in Park Ridge, Illinois. Inga raised chickens (Alfred's idea I'm sure) in the back yard. A photo shows a stark little house surrounded by a wooden sidewalk with a high fence in back. Inga is standing tall and regal in her hat and long skirts on the wooden walk with baby Gladys in an elegant wicker baby carriage. I'm not sure exactly what Alfred did for a living but it had something to do with insurance, investments, and real estate. His diaries from the early 1900's have entries relating to rent collections, building repairs, etc. Norman Anda Jurgensen was born December 26, 1901 and Alf was born in 1902.

In 1904, Alfred and Inga built a home at 3739 N. Tripp (Tripp was known as 42nd Court in 1904) and moved in in March 1905. According to Gladys, the family moved in on the eve of Grandpa's birthday. The house was still full of sawdust and construction debris but Grandma stayed up all night cleaning because Grandpa's side of the family was coming the next day, by horse drawn wagon from Nebraska, to see Alfred's fine new house. The house was a six room sturdily built frame house. There were three bedrooms, a bathroom, a large attic, a living room or parlor, dining room, pantry, kitchen, and an alcove called the playroom off the dining room. Although there were older homes in the neighborhood most of community was developed around 1900. Sidewalks were wooden and streets were not yet paved, schools were just being built and much of the surrounding area was still farm land. One family story is that Grandpa didn't want Grandma to have to wash dishes (Grandma always considered herself a "lady") and so he had a very low, child's height sink installed in the kitchen.

There was usually a hired girl to help with the chores when the children were young but that sink remained until the house was sold in 1988 and poor Gladys had to wash dishes all bent over all her life. Laundry was taken to "Russian town", an area near Kostner and Berteau and hand washed by Russian immigrants. Appearances were important to Grandma and family photos show beautiful little children perfectly dressed in starched white dresses and suits. My aunt Margaret was born in 1906, and my dad, Johan Lawrence in 1909. A notation in Grandpa's diary for May 18, 1909 says "Inga up all night celebrating - Fifth born 10:00 A.M.). She was probably celebrating Norwegian Independence Day which is May 17th. Virginia Jane was born in 1911. She was born with some sort of brain damage which left her crippled on one side of her body and mentally retarded. Both Grandma and Grandpa tried to get medical help for Jane but there was little help available at that time. There are letters written by Grandpa to various doctors seeking advice and at one point Grandma left the family for six months when she took Jane to St. Louis for some kind of treatment. Jane wore a heavy leg brace all her life and her mental condition deteriorated in her adult years. But as a child Jane could do many of the things the other children did. Jane went to Irving Park School as long as possible. Years later when I went to the same school I had teachers who still remembered Jane. The

other children attended Irving Park also until Grandma had some sort of falling out with the administration and put all the kids in Belding School.

Gladys was the only student in the bunch. She completed High School at Schurz and became a secretary. Dad and Al and Norm were terrors. There are several notations in the diaries about the boys getting into trouble with the neighbors, getting bit by dogs, being at the police station. Dad's 7th grade report card states that he would do better academically if his attendance improved. I remember my Dad saying that his mother was too "old country" to keep tabs on the kids. They could lie about school and she wouldn't know the difference.

One of the stories I remember about the neighborhood was that there were wooden sidewalks. Gladys described a ditch of sorts along the sidewalk. She said "bums" would sleep in the ditches and when you were walking on the sidewalk the bums would jump up and scare you, probably because they had been awakened. She said that when the sidewalks were torn up in preparation for laying new cement ones all the kids found money and lost marbles and other treasures that had fallen between the planks all those years. Dad also told of taking his wagon to a farm that was where Gompers Park is now and buying sweet corn. He would then sell it to the neighbors.

My favorite story (Dad could really tell a story so that you could picture it in your mind), was when Dad was walking to Belding School one morning. As he walked down Tripp he saw a house on fire. He ran to the fire house at Tripp and Belle Plaine and reported the fire. As Dad watched, the firemen brought out the prancing horses and positioned them in front of the pumper. The reins and other trappings dropped from the ceiling into position over the horses and the firemen hurriedly hitched them up. The horses were prancing and snorting, anxious to get going and as the firewagon started off one of the firemen pulled Dad up on to the wagon. He had the most thrilling ride to the fire and after the fire had been struck, Dad continued on to school quite late but feeling great about his heroism. However, his teacher didn't believe him and he got in big trouble for his tardiness. Years later his eyes still danced when he told that story.

There was a little bench in the hall by the window and a rosette of triangular glass pieces on the window that acted like a prism sending rainbows on the walls. Grandma's room was at the top of the stairs. It held a big bed and a small one for Jane as well as several dressers. Gladys room was a curious child's dream. There were exotic pictures on the walls; Arabs on camels, little girls drinking beer and photos of people I didn't know. More black furniture, the camel saddle, and an odd "thing" that looked like a model or miniature of an Arab market place. It was made out of a gray or silver metal and was very dusty. Parts seemed to have some color but it was too dusty to tell. There were a few figures, and an awning and stalls with goods and fruit. It stood about ten inches high and was about a foot long. I'd sneak a look at it every chance I got which wasn't too often.

The only reason I ever went upstairs was to go to the bathroom. The second floor was scary and dark and Jane was usually up there. I was usually escorted to the bathroom by my dad and on the way back I got to ring the bell that hung next to the attic door. The bell was for Jane to ring if she needed anything. Jane had trouble walking and often fell going down the stairs. My Dad was the only one able to pick her up when she fell. Many times Gladys would rush over to our place to get Dad because Jane had fallen. Jane frightened me with her awkward movements and angry sounding voice but Mother said she loved children.

Grandpa lived in the attic. He wasn't included in any family doings. I don't know if it was his choice or if the family ostracized him. We would be sitting at the dining room table and hear him coming down the stairs. Someone would jump up and close the kitchen door. We would hear him rustling around in there but no one would go in until he was finished and had gone back upstairs. Yet every time we went to Grandma's Dad would always take us up to visit Grandpa in the attic. Dad would say, "Well, I guess I'll go see the old man". And he would take me and sometimes my brother up the stairs to the attic. We'd get to the top of the stairs, turn and there he'd be sitting in a chair with his hands on his knees like a king on his throne. Tom and I would hide behind my Dad. They'd exchange a few amenities at top volume because Grandpa was deaf, Grandpa would acknowledge us and we'd try to say something and then we'd leave. My dad always called him "the old man" but it didn't seem disrespectful. Grandpa gave me a few thoughtful gifts - a silver spoon, and some drawing materials so I knew he cared about me. Among his papers that I now have are letters from his sister, Josepha. He seemed to be very sentimental and was very much loved by his side of the family. Josepha kept him up to date with family matters and often expressed concern for his family. He apparently corresponded with his brothers and sister and their families all his life. Yet I never heard anyone in my family even speak of the rest of the Jurgensens.

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My Dad's home was not a happy one. My grandfather was deaf and everyone wrote notes to communicate with him. I have some of these notes. I think, from reading their notes, that my grandparents were overwhelmed by Jane's problems. They began blaming each other for her condition and disagreed on how to care for her. Grandma tried to divorce Grandpa several times beginning in 1918. The letters between lawyers are full of bitter accusations. For some reason they never divorced but the hostility between them continued with Jane caught in the tug-of-war.

Sometime in the late twenties Grandpa bought an egg ranch in South Haven Michigan. He and the boys worked on the ranch while Grandma stayed home in Chicago with the girls.

Gladys worked as a secretary for an investor, Orin Stutzman (Stutz) and they fell in love. Gladys kept a carbon of every letter she ever typed, I think, because I found a pile of them in her room. They were engaged to be married and Stutz gave Gladys a diamond ring. According to what I've read Gladys was witty with a sharp mind. She was described as a beautiful blond with big blue eyes. Photos of her and Stutz show Gladys with a short dutch bob hairdo and big innocent eyes. Stutz looks older and somewhat portly wearing a straw hat and bow tie. Gladys had her own apartment which she filled with exotic furnishings. The furniture was painted black with gilded accents. Some pieces were decorated with paintings of flowers or Chinese landscapes. Gladys loved unusual things particularly Oriental or Middle Eastern. Persian miniature paintings, and a camel saddle were among her possessions. And she loved paisley. We always had boxes of beautiful silk paisley print fabric, gifts from Gladys to my mom who was quite a seamstress. I suppose Gladys was influenced by the Rudolph Valentino craze of the times.

Grandpa had a lot of stock and when the market crashed in 1929 Grandpa lost just about everything. He had invested heavily and now he couldn't keep both the ranch and the house. He tried to get Grandma to sell the house or to use it as collateral to obtain another loan but she wouldn't do it. The house was in her name and she would not sign the papers. Bitter feuding continued. Grandpa belittled her insinuating that she was a dumb Norwegian who couldn't understand business. The children were drawn into the fighting. Gladys moved back home to help out financially and at one point she persuaded Stutz to intercede with Grandpa. I have a copy of Stutz' tough talking letter telling him to come home and take care of his family. But Grandpa never

gave up. He kept dreaming of ways to make a go of it. I have letters he sent to his friends trying to talk them into buying eggs. The eggs, fancy, unfertilized, and individually wrapped in tissue were geared towards the wealthy summer people on the Michigan shore. He even tried other ways to keep the ranch going. He bought donut makers (I found two in the house) intending to go into the donut business and he tried to sell chicken manure to farmers for their strawberries. It appears that life on the ranch was pretty miserable. Gladys moved back home to help out financially. She even gave Grandma her diamond ring to sell.

In 1932, Dad's brother, Al, killed himself. There is no mention of his death in any of the papers I have and no one ever talked about it but there is one letter that Al wrote to his mother a few weeks before his death in which he talks about how hard and lonely their life in Michigan is. Mom says she was told that Al's suicide was due to being in love with someone who couldn't marry him but I think it was due, at least in part, to all the misery around him.

Also in 1932 Gladys' boyfriend, Stutz, became ill and after a month in Edgewater Hospital, Stutz died. Gladys saved a pile of letters from Stutz' brother. The first letter thanks Gladys for sitting with him at his brother's bedside during the month-long illness. Later letters show that the brother had become "interested" in Gladys. He made numerous attempts to see Gladys but she apparently had no interest in him. Eventually the letters become less amorous and in his last letter he mentions his wife and child and talks about how sick he is. Ironically another letter shows that when he died, Stutz was only a few days away from being arrested for embezzlement. One of his brother's letters thanks Gladys for helping out, hinting that she may have helped remove certain things from the office. Stutz was the only love of her life that I know of.

Grandma and Grandpa continued their feud. In one note Grandma tells Grandpa that they have no more money and no more diamond rings to sell. I don't know under what circumstances Grandpa came back to Chicago but I do know that Grandpa lived alone in the attic for the rest of his life.

Norman married and had a child, Shirley, but was later divorced in the mid forties. He returned home to live. Norm worked as a bus driver but had a serious alcohol problem. I remember him as a very sweet, loving man who had lots of time for little kids like me. He did bring his family a lot of grief and he died in 1951 of alcohol related illness. I remember the night he died because I was sleeping on the sofa in the living room when I was awakened by ambulance drivers carrying Norm down the stairs. Mother has told me that my dad had just brought Norm home after a long binge and the family was sitting in the dining room discussing plans to put Norm in a treatment program. As they talked Norm died upstairs.

Margaret married Bob Bishop a boy who lived several doors down the street. They had three children, Marilyn, Robert, and Barbara. They also lived in the house on and off in their early years of marriage. Margaret must have inherited Grandma's grandiose ideas because she and Bob spent most of their time shopping and creating a picture of wealth. They had a nice home in Park Ridge, were well dressed, and gave great presents. They had unique ideas about child rearing leaving the kids to raise themselves. They had odd ideas about a lot of things including nutrition and health. Uncle Bob's brother Jim was a quack who claimed to cure diseases with some kind of electronic radio-like gadget. They all thought he was a savior. Once my dad was called to rush out to their house because Bob was deathly ill. Bob was bleeding from an ulcer and Dad insisted that they call an ambulance. Margaret wouldn't let the ambulance leave until Jim had his machine tuned into the direction the ambulance would take to the hospital. My cousin Marilyn's practice of reflexology contributed to my Grandmother's death from gangrene. And once when Bob and Margaret were babysitting me they treated my cold by making me eat chopped garlic on toast. I thought they were great. To me it seemed that the party didn't start until Bob and Margaret arrived.

My parents met on a blind date arranged by a mutual friend who worked at the Irving theater. Mom had been born and raised in Lake Geneva, Wisconsin. After high school she came to Chicago to go to business collage. She became friends with the cashier at the show who introduced her to my dad. They married in 1938. Mom said that Dad didn't introduce her to his family until the day before their wedding. She thinks that he was afraid that his eccentric family would scare her off. Gladys was kind of eccentric and "arty", Norm was a drunk, Grandpa was in the attic, Jane talked to herself, and Margaret and Bob flitted in and out like Uncle and Auntie Mame. Nevertheless Mom and Dad had a nice wedding in the church parlor with just their parents attending. Mom's folks came in from Wisconsin and they all went back to Tripp Avenue for cake that Inga had made - a yellow cake with custard filling and white frosting. It's still one of Mom's favorites. Then they left for a six month stay in Florida where Dad was temporarily working for Pullman servicing air conditioners on the trains. When they came back to Chicago they lived at the Tripp Avenue house for awhile. Their income helped the family out. Mom worked for Florsheim Shoes and Goodyear Rubber. Eventually they moved to their own apartment and I was born in 1943 in the middle of WW II. Dad was about to be drafted at thirty five so he enlisted. Dad looked young for his age and he didn't want anyone to think he was a "shirker". He and his best friend Herman decided to join the army but as luck would have it Dad got put in the Navy instead. He was sent to Great Lakes for basic training. He came home when I was three months old for my baptism. Herman was my god-father. I have a picture of Herman in his army uniform and Dad in his navy uniform holding me in my long christening gown.

Dad was trained in electronics at the University of Iowa and was sent to Pearl Harbor to work on torpedoes. Dad didn't do well in the Navy. He had health problems and didn't take well to Navy life. Eventually he got a medical discharge and came home when I was two.

We lived in an apartment at Kedvale and Byron. We were close enough to visit Tripp Avenue often. Grandma didn't have a phone because Jane would misuse it so they would come over to use our phone. We didn't have a yard so I would go over to their house to play. Norm would put violets from the yard into little pots for me and my friends. On hot summer nights I would play in the hose. I can still remember the feel of the wet grass and the icy water on my bare feet. They had a dog, a little black and white English cocker named Buddy. Buddy was the sweetest dog. He could wander the neighborhood without frightening anyone. I loved him but I wore him out. Poor Buddy would hide under the sofa or the piano but I could crawl under and pull him out. One day Buddy wandered off and never came back. Dad said that sometimes dogs did that when they got old.

We went to Grandma's every Sunday for dinner. Dinner was usually the same; plates of open faced sandwiches made of limpa bread, butter, and boiled ham or sliced hard boiled eggs. The sandwiches were arranged in concentric circles in several layers creating a flower-like effect. There might be gjetost, a sweet brown goat cheese that looks like Fels-Naptha soap, coffee cake from a Scandinavian bakery on North Avenue or cake. On special occasions Grandma would serve snow pudding. It was mounds of beaten egg white floating in a sea of yellow custard. I loved it until my mother told me it was made from raw eggs. Yuck! There was always coffee and milk and wonderful homemade cookies and of course everything was served on the best china and silver. Sometimes we would walk to the candy store at the end of the alley on Grace to buy penny candy.

The house at that time was gray painted clapboard. The porch was half enclosed, that is the part from the railing to the floor was clapboard too instead of the usual spindles. The railing was broad like a window sill and you could sit on it. There were a few porch chairs made out of sticks with the bark still on and a hammock. The hammock was my dad's navy hammock and was strung from the large column by the steps diagonally across the porch. Gladys would sleep in it on hot summer nights with Buddy lying under her keeping guard. The rope from the hammock left deep marks in the column that were still visible. The living room and dining room were painted dark green. Chinese and oriental rugs covered the bare floors. Heavy velvet drapes, green on one side red on the other, hung between the hall and the living room for heat conservation. Sheer white curtains hung at the windows. A piano stood in the living room next to a very large old grandfather clock. Gladys' sofa and her victrola were also in the living room. The sofa was made of black painted wood with a cane back and upholstered cushion seats. When my brother was a baby he put his head through the cane making a big hole. The phonograph was a big box on dainty

spindled legs. It was black and green with gilt trim and delicate paintings on the front. It had a crank and some really old records. It was really beautiful and different from anything I've ever seen. Framed photos, vases and watercolor landscapes were the only accessories. The dining room held a large table covered with a heavy velvet cloth similar to the draperies. Over that was a table cloth sometimes white linen or damask, sometimes a heavy woven cloth. A glass doored bookcase stood on one side of the room and a glass round doored china cabinet stood on the other. The china cabinet was filled with delicate cups and dishes. The bookcase had more knickknacks, photos and some very interesting books. Palmistry, reflexology, and Rudyard Kipling were among the titles. A large gilt framed print of an elderly couple sitting on a row boat hung over the bookcase. A clock and two large brass candle holders sat on top of the bookcase. During the depression Grandma would keep a few coins under the candlesticks. If someone stopped by needing a hand-out the coins were always there. Bums knew they could get a sandwich or a few coins at the house. Mother said the house was marked in some way. I believe it because years later Gladys was still being visited and ripped off by Gypsies on a regular basis.

Mother said that Grandma always wore a good dress covered with a smock. Her hair was braided and wrapped around her head with a few pincurls in front. When someone came to the door she would pull out the pins, fluff her curls, take off the smock and go to answer the door like a proper lady.

In the playroom was a sewing cabinet of the same exotic style as the phonograph and a table and a sofa. The little table held an unusual lamp. It had a bronze sculpted figure of a girl pouring water out of a jug. The base of the lamp held a green stained glass pond and the shade was matching green glass. Being the only small child in the family I spent a lot of time there dozing on the couch while the adults talked and talked. I looked at the books, played with the buttons in the sewing cabinet, drew pictures and usually fell asleep. I don't remember much about the kitchen except that it was dark. I do remember Grandma making Berliner Kransers, my favorite cookie, Krumkake, a flat tortilla like cookie which she curled around the broom handle into a cylinder, and home-made grape jelly. Dad would take us for rides in the country to look for wild grapes. We would pull over to the side of the road and Grandma would pick grapes off some farmer's fence. I was afraid the farmer would get mad at us but I loved that wild grape jelly.

The back yard was full of flowers. A large tree grew close to the house near the back steps. The area around it was covered with lily-of-the-valley. Violets, lilacs, tulips, peonies, and black-eyed susans also grew in the yard and along the side of the house. Currant bushes grew at the north side of the back porch and there were also elderberries. Gladys made elderberry juice every year, forcing jars of it on anyone who came over. It was an acquired taste. Honeysuckle bushes grew in front of the house and Gladys planted a little blue spruce in the front yard. Gladys and Norm were the gardeners. Gladys cut the grass and raked leaves well into her eighties. In her later years she fumed about people who walked their dogs by her garbage cans. She rigged a large bell (probably the one that used to hang by the bathroom) by the garage and strung a rope from the bell to the back door. When she saw a dog walker by the garbage can she would pull on the rope and ring the bell, hopefully scaring the dog and its owner. Another time when neighborhood kids were riding their motorcycles through the backyard, Gladys dragged a railroad tie across the back sidewalk. She was pretty feisty.

My brother Tom was born in 1951. I had to go to Grandma's while my Mom was in the hospital. I slept with Gladys, a spooky experience. Grandma and Gladys told me to wash my clothes and my hair in my bath water which was not only weird but quite a demand on a kid who at eight had never washed her own hair let alone her clothes. I remember Dad running up the stairs, two at a time, to his mother's room yelling, "It's a boy, It's a boy!"

Grandma died in 1952. She had been getting senile - hardening of the arteries. She would sit on the front porch singing the Norwegian National anthem while awaiting visits from King Olaf and President Eisenhower.

Grandpa died in 1955 of cancer. Gladys continued living at home with Jane. Gladys lost her job when her company closed. At about the same time my Aunt Margaret filed suit to sell the house to settle my grandparents' estate. My father was executor and argued that if the house was sold Gladys and Jane would have nowhere to live. Gladys was unemployed at the time and was in her late fifties. Jane got a small amount of money from Social Security and needed a great deal of care. My dad won and the house was not sold. Gladys and Jane had a place to live but Margaret and my dad never spoke after that. It was a family tragedy to me. My doting aunt and uncle and my cousins and their families were gone from my life forever. There were no more holiday parties, no visits, no family and I really mourned for them. Gladys was caught in the middle. She loved her sister and her family and realized the fairness of selling the house. At the same time she needed a place to stay and knew my dad was thinking of her. Yet the war of words went on for years. Margaret and her daughters continued to nag Gladys about the house. My dad would have nothing to do with any of them. If we went over to Gladys' and any of the Bishops were there we would turn right around and leave without speaking. If anyone mentioned their names Dad would walk out of the room swearing.

Jane was placed in a nursing home when it became too hard for Gladys to care for her. Jane died in the mid-sixties during a flu epidemic. We all went to her funeral and for a while there was a small truce. We even went to a couple of Bishop family weddings. But then things went sour again. Both Dad and Margaret became ill. Margaret died a year or so before Dad. He was in such poor health that we didn't tell him. Dad died in 1974.

Gladys continued living in the house. Her last job had been with the Association House, a community center in the De Paul area. She always had a love of unusual things and her interest was renewed at the many rummage sales at the Association House. I think Gladys hit every rummage sale in the neighborhood. She knew all the resale shops and bargain counters and she loved a bargain. If she found something marked down at Fields that was a good buy she'd buy in quantity. And we'd all get it for Christmas. We all had the same striped turtlenecks, dishes, knickknacks, even shoes. I later learned that Barbara and her daughters all got them too. Opening gifts from Gladys was like opening "a box of chocolates", you never knew what you were going to get. Her packages were always (I'm talking YEARS) wrapped in white tissue tied simply and elegantly with burgundy satin ribbon. She must have had miles of it. Sometimes there was a real treasure inside. Like the long red cotton knit nighties that I adored and wore until they were above my knees. Or the beautiful hand thrown ceramic cups that she had bought at the Art Institutes Students' sale. More often the package held something really weird like the animal skins painted with Indian designs that she gave my brother one year when he was about eight. She said they were to decorate his wall but when my mother hung them the wall became stained with grease. Gladys had saturated them with her favorite product, Neats-Foot Oil. I think we got a bottle of that once too. She swore by it as a conditioner for shoes and boots. Gladys' favorite boots were a knee high, laced up the front pair that must have dated from 1920. She kept them water proof and like new with Neats-Foot Oil. Another unique gift was a triangular piece of cloth, with long straps that looked like it had been hand woven in Peru or Chile. It was really neat but no one knew what it was... a hat, a purse, a baby carrier... Gladys didn't know either and after she died I found several more in the attic. Gladys was getting a bit eccentric. One time we got a frantic phone call from her at dinner time. She had to be picked up immediately from an antique shop on Clark Street before it closed. She had bought something too big to carry. Dinner time was sacred at our house but Dad, with much swearing, went to pick her up. He was still cussing when he came home. Gladys' find was a big oak door with a stained glass window. The door didn't fit anywhere in the house but she had to have it.

Gladys' shopping didn't sit well with my Dad. He and Gladys were devoted to each other but she drove him crazy with her stubbornness and eccentricities. Another time when we were visiting at Gladys', Dad headed towards the stairs to go to the bathroom. As he went up the stairs Gladys stood up wringing her hands, moaning softly as she stared towards the stairway. We all sat with our mouths open wondering what was going on. Gladys crept towards the stairs with a look of dread on her face. All of a sudden my dad started yelling and swearing, " My God, woman what the @%*\$##@?" Gladys ran up the stairs saying, " Now Lawrence..". Gladys had bought an old pipe organ somewhere and somehow got it up the stairs and into the bedroom. It was a small organ by organ standards but it didn't look small in the bedroom. No one ever played it. Gladys had a knack for getting resale shop owners to deliver her larger purchases. She could con them into anything. I'd go to the same shops and be told that there was no delivery service.

Her encounters with the Gypsies and con men were another source of aggravation. She bought linoleum from a guy who never came back to install it, she had chimney rockers, and numerous thefts by Gypsies. Once she had the house sided with dark brown asphalt siding. There was a lot of discussion about it. Then she wanted to paint the trim red, her favorite color. Dad threw a fit, saying it would look like certain a minority group lived there. So it was never painted.

The Christmas tree was another sore spot. Getting a Christmas tree was always an ordeal, .. picking a good one, one that was fresh, the kind that didn't shed, etc, etc, and then we'd have to find two, one for Gladys. I can barely remember the year Gladys insisted on using real candles on the tree. When she lit them Dad stood next to the tree with a bucket of water. After a few minutes he made her put them out. But everyone talked about it for years. I loved the Jurgensen's trees. They were a hodgepodge of fascinating ornaments - delicate blown glass, a wax Baby Jesus nestled in angle hair, a yarn Salvation Army bell ringer, paper and cloth animals and a variety of Norwegian nissen. Under the tree was a whole village of wooden houses created by my cousin Bobby. The village was inhabited by tiny porcelain elves. I could spend hours gazing at that tree.

Gladys had a knack for venturing into unsavory neighborhoods. Somewhere in the conversation she'd mention where she had been and Dad would shake his head, cuss a bit, and maybe have a stiff drink. She liked quack doctors, chiropractors, and napropaths. The crazier the medical theory the more she believed in it. Her bookcase was full of books on health and nutrition. She bought a juicer and insisted everyone drink carrot juice. Yet she rarely cooked and ate only when she was eating out at someone's home. Amazingly I found tons of cookbooks including volumes of typed recipes in her things. She had every kitchen gadget

known to man partly because she had worked for Ekco for awhile. She also had great pots and pans. Red Le Creuset pots that weighed a ton. I think she had every pot Le Creuset made and gave them as gifts also. That must have been a great sale! All I ever knew her to cook were cookies. Great cookies. Cookies we'd kill for. There were tiny spritz like cookies made with almond paste and cardamom, tiny dainty chocolate chips, and the best crispy buttery oatmeal cookies I've ever eaten. She would spend days and nights before Christmas baking and everyone - family, friends, and neighbors would get a tin of her wonderful cookies. I have the oatmeal cookie recipe but have had mixed results they just don't turn out as good as Gladys'.

I always thought Gladys was the greatest. She was cool. Unique, her own person, she stood up to Dad, she'd had a tragic love affair, she smoked, she drank Jim Beam Black Label straight. Once when I was a little kid I told my mother that when I grew up I wanted to be just like Gladys. Mom gave me a look, sputtered a bit but said nothing.

Gladys's favorite color was red. One day she painted everything in the bathroom except for the inside of the sink, toilet, and tub, red. Even the toilet seat and the water heater was red. When we were cleaning out the attic after she died, I found a table set up with paint supplies and a pile of things, boxes, tins, chairs, that she had painted red and another pile of things that were waiting to be painted.

We also found huge barrels filled with "leather things", hats, tins, clothing. All neatly labeled. Gladys was a saver. She saved documents, letters, clothing, things, false teeth, and in her later years she saved newspapers - "There's plenty of good reading left in there", plastic bags, the boxes that her meals-on-wheels came in, even the wrappers from hard candy were sorted by color and neatly banded together.

Gladys clipped newspaper articles and kept them in files. You could call her and say, Do you remember when the alderman said such and such?" And she'd say, "Just a minute I've got it right here." She was interested in politics, she always protested her property taxes and when the city threatened to build the Crosstown Expressway through the area she joined the Anti-Crosstown Coalition. I remember watching TV one afternoon with my kids and suddenly seeing Gladys on TV with a cop on each arm escorting her out of City Hall. She had been in a sit-in with the ACC.

Gladys was very supportive of me. I was an aspiring artist and showed my paintings at several neighborhood art shows. Gladys always bought my paintings, took them home and framed them and hung them on the walls. It was a little embarrassing but I loved it.

Gladys had another embarrassing habit. She felt fabric, your clothing, your drapes, your tablecloth... and now we all do it. My daughters and I will catch ourselves rubbing someone's sweater, or scarf between our fingers saying, "hmmm, this is nice.." And we all find ourselves attracted to paisley and Gladys' other trademark... beads. She always wore a string of unusual and exotic beads. I'll be shopping, see a beaded necklace and immediately think that's a pair of "Gladys" beads. Her other trademarks were candles, preferably red ones, and unusual expensive shoes. Gladys had nice narrow feet and loved beautiful shoes. We found many, many pairs of shoes in her closet after her death, At least ten pairs were the same strange, brand new, square toed sandals. Undoubtedly they were intended to be Christmas presents.

In her later years Gladys became somewhat befuddled. Mom walked over to visit her several times a week. The house was in disrepair and Gladys relied on the neighbors to help out in emergencies which were frequent. Dad maintained the house the best he could but it wasn't easy because Gladys had her own ideas on maintenance. After dad died, my husband John, and my mom helped to maintain the house at least minimally. The neighbors also helped. Gladys usually waited until there was a disaster before calling for help. She was noted for calling in the middle of the night because the roof was leaking or a frantic daytime call that hoodlums from Schurz High School were loitering under the back porch. We began to think of the house as an albatross. We wanted to help but the task was so great and Gladys was so difficult.

Gladys died at the age of 88. She had collapsed during a heat wave was admitted to the hospital and after a few weeks she just died peacefully with my Mom at her bedside.

There was no will and my cousin Barbara and I tried to administer her estate. It soon became apparent that Barbara wanted to continue her mother's feud with us. She distrusted us so much that she insisted that my mother, who had looked after Gladys and that house for so many years, not be allowed in the house. In the interest of maintaining some degree of peace so that the estate could be settled, my mother and I reluctantly agreed. After all those years the house was still the cause of much bitterness and many unpleasant memories. The need to hang on to the house at all cost was so much a part of our lives it was very hard to let it go. The house was my family home since my parents did not own their own home. Mom always said that we didn't own a house because Dad had enough responsibility keeping up the Tripp Avenue house. We still loved the house even though none of us wanted to live in it -too many sad memories.